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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON ACTION IN SOUTH LEBANON

Editorial Commentary

-- "Open possibilities"

Columnist Nahed Hattar writes on the back-page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (07/13): "Hezbollah's bold decision to deal a new successful blow to the Israeli occupation army lies on that dividing line between being a support tactic to ease Israel's aggressive pressure on Gaza, amidst Arab and international silence, and being a defense-offense strategy.... Tel Aviv of course has the option of a comprehensive escalation, including strikes or even war against Syria and Iran. This means that the region would go on fire, with the United States reaping the negative effects in Iraq and a new popular wave against the U.S. policies would be launched. The colonialist American Israeli alliance is able to bring more harm to the Palestinians, Iraqis, Lebanese and Syrians. But there will never be a military solution to colonialist fight with the Arab people who can no longer tolerate the aggression, the arrogance, the contempt, the usurpation and the starvation. The conflict is open then as long as there is resistance, which not just a mere idea, but effect organizations in Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq.... A war would do away with Abu Mazen's presidency and the cooperative Palestinian trend, and would immediately finish off the active Lebanese formula that came about following Hariri's assassination, but the most important development would be the fall of the Malki government in Iraq, the end of the sectarian warfare in that country, and turning all weapons against the American occupation. Amidst all this, Jordan would be able to breathe easily with regard to the Sharon-Olmert plan to swallow the West Bank and implement the old-new plan for the alternative homeland in Jordan.... We did not invent the conflict with Israel and America and we did not choose it. It is imposed on our nation and is challenging its existence and the fate of its people. There is no choice but for the nation to accept the challenge."

-- "The south is on fire"

Chief Editor Ayman Safadi writes on the back-page of independent, centrist Arabic daily Al-Ghad (07/13): "South Lebanon is going to go on fire and this fire may reach Beirut and Damascus. On the surface, Hezbollah can be held responsible for the escalation, but the scene is much more complicated. The scene must be looked at in its entirety, and in this scene Israel takes full responsibility for keeping the shadow of war hovering over the region's present and future. The past years have seen Israel's retraction from the peace process. The result is that Israel benefited from the peace process while the Palestinians got nothing, making the situation a time bomb

waiting to explode. Rights are not given; the oppression is not eased; peace is not accomplished. Israel enjoys security and peace and the Palestinians are deprived of them and suffer more and more. The state of imbalance is not corrected. There had to be some action.... One cannot look at what is happening in south Lebanon and Gaza in isolation of the conflict's history and the results of the Israeli policy. In this formula, Israel is condemned by all means and measures."

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